

THE  
CHURCH of England's  
COMPLAINT

Against the

Irregularities

Of some of its

CLERGY.

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By a Presbyter of the Church of England.

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*Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris & carcere dignum,  
Si vis esse aliquis : Probitas laudatur & alget. Juv.*

Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season ;  
Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering, and  
Doctrine ; for the time will come, when they will not  
endure sound Doctrine.----- 2 Tim. Ch. 4. 2,3

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minster. MDCCIX.

THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
COMPLAINANT  
IN  
THE  
COURT OF  
CLERGY

By a Petition of the Church of England.

Sheweth that the Church of England, by its  
lawful representatives, the Clergy, doth  
Petition the Honourable the House of Commons,  
in Parliament assembled, that they will not  
pass any Bill, which shall tend to the  
dissolution of the Church of England, or to the  
separation of the Clergy from the Laity.

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TO THE  
READER.

**I** Have Authority to inform you, that the Author of the ensuing Discourse is a Member and Priest of the Church of England. He has no design (God knows his Heart) to gratifie the vitiated Palates of Dissenters, who, upon all occasions take the Boldness to blacken and cast Dirt on the Church and its Clergy: His Intention only was to stir up the Clergy to follow those Primitive Rules, as are prescribed in the Rubrick and Canons of our excellent Church; upon which account he humbly address'd himself to his Grace the Archbishop of C----- with reason supposing, if his Grace was made sensible of the ensuing Irregularities, a Method would soon be found out to reform them.

I am further obliged to let you know what gave birth and rise to the following Papers. The Author had the Relation of that pompous Funeral from a zealous Member of our Church at the House of a Learned and Reverend Clergyman: Bunhill was first of all pitcht on for the Place of that Funeral, tho' afterwards, I know not upon what grounds, Bethlem was assign'd, and that Ground was consecrated, and so all was as it should be.

Before the Author could have a true State of the Matter, the Bunhill or Bethlem Story was drawn up, and he was loth to alter it: But since he has received from a Clergyman (whom he can confide in) a true Information of

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that Matter of Fact, the first Account proves to be true, viz. that the Scene was Bunhill. The Author was heartily sorry, that such Clergymen of Character, and Men so stanch for the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church, should with their Presence grace such a Funeral to such a Place. He has reason to believe that they were trapp'd into it; and he doubts not, but if such a thing was to be re-acted, they would reject it with the utmost Scorn.

When the Author was in, some other Irregularities presented themselves, and he was resolved to give them a Hearing, which lengthen'd the Tract beyond the first Design. He has spoken briefly upon every Head, knowing it to be Rudeness to trespass too far upon the Patience of the Person address'd to. He has treated his Grace with all imaginable Respect and Submission; and he hopes that no Expressions will offend: And he thinks he has given sufficient Intimation to his Grace, that the World will hear no more of Irregularities of that sort; for the Author is sensible that his Grace with a Convocation, would soon put new Vigour into all the Rubricks and Canons, which would soon render our Church all over Glorious.

The Author has treated the Clergy in general with great Candor and Tendernefs; and if some Expressions seem somewhat harsh, he knows that 'tis plain matter of fact, and ought not to be skinn'd over: For the skilful Surgeon, to make a compleat Cure, always goes to the Bottom of the Wound. But the Author is heartily sorry that there should be occasion for such Expressions; but he thinks he's bound in duty to single out some tainted Ones, lest ill-designing lewd Atheistical Men (which are too numerous in this Age) should impute the Irregularities of some few to the Whole Order, and then Priest-craft would be the Celeusma. But if any Protestant Dissenters should be so imprudent, as to sing 10 Paeans upon this Occasion, the Author assures me, that he will soon turn their Jollity into serious Sadness, and present



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*sent the World with the Irregularities (at 'present to call them no worse) of their Teachers.*

*He would have them to know (for he fears them not) that he has a vast Field to walk in, and a great deal of sad Matter to handle, if there be occasion; and he dares say, they are so wise, as to be silent, as he desires them to be; otherwise he is certain they will be wanting to their Interest: For should they clamour, and raise Dust, the Author has reason to think it will put out their own Eyes.*

*The Author was lately discoursing with a Learned Doctor of our Church upon the Topicks hereafter insisted on, and he was of opinion, that within 20 Tears or more, it would be as common to solemnize Marriages in the Afternoon, and in private Houses, tho' 'tis expressly forbidden both by Canon and Rubrick, as 'tis now to Baptize with the Publick Form, and to Church Women at home. And to confirm the Author in this Opinion, he gave him an Instance with leave to make it publick. A Couple in haste to be married, came to the Doctor, and 'twas late in the Afternoon, and the Doctor was press'd with Arguments, such as they were, but he as honestly refused to comply with their Request: And the Dr. says, that he was credibly inform'd, that they were married that Evening in St. Bartholomew's Church by West Smithfield. If so, how can that Reverend Divine justify this Violation of the Rules of the Church? 'Tis reported, that it was the constant Practice of the Slip-Stocking Doctor; but he is gone to his Place--- What the aforesaid Dr. suggested is commonly practis'd already among the Great Ones of the other End of the Town: And I see no reason but that others have as good a Right (which is none at all) to practice the same Thing. 'Tis a Crime in the Clergy, and such a Crime, that can never be defended; and I cannot understand how either the Archbishop, or the meanest Priest can dispence with the Rubricks and Canons of the Church: for I always thought that the  
dispensive*

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dispensive Power was lodg'd in another Church.

But to go on; The Dr. gave the Author two notorious Instances of Pulpit-Plagiarism: One was preach'd at St. Paul's, and very lately too, before the Lord Mayor, &c. The Sermon was commended by the said Lord Mayor, and the Plagiary Preacher had his Lordship's solemn Thanks. But Dr. Atterbury discover'd the Cheat, and inform'd his Lordship that it was wholly taken out of the Decay of Christian Piety, which shew'd the Decay or want of Learning in the Preacher. The other was one Mr. Rich (who was not the Glory of the sacred Order) that had the Assurance to preach one of Glanvill's printed Sermons, and to re-print it.

The same Person (with whose Conversation I was mightily pleas'd) gave me an Instance of the great difficulty of perswading the People to bring their Children to Church to be Baptiz'd, as 'tis their duty to do. 'Twas the Learned Dr. L——d that could not with all his Rhetorick perswade one of his Parishioners to comply; but the poor Woman (who was dangerously ill, of which Sicknefs she dy'd) must be pleas'd, and would have the Infant Baptiz'd at home. But the Dr. refus'd it, and I am sure he was in the right: for who can dispence with the Rules of the Church? and for which Refusal the Father, if alive, owes the Dr. a Grudge to this day. Admirable Charity! The Child presently after was removed into the Country, and there Baptiz'd.

If all the Clergy were of one Opinion, as they ought to be, 'twould be impossible that any one of that sacred Order should be overcome with Arguments against the express Order of the Rubrick and Canons, which are confirmed by an Act of Parliament in the 14th of K. Charles II. of ever blessed Memory. But there's a common Proverb, If one won't another will. If the Gown refuses, the Cloak will not, and away for the Seducer. Were I a Pastor of a Church,



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*I would try the Case, come what would: I would try the Strength of the Toleration-Act. I am sure that looks not that way. The Dissenters can't have the Hardiness to plead it. It would be worth the while for some Potent Divine to try that Cause, and defend the Rights and Liberties of the Church and Clergy. I dare say, that Dagon would fall down before the Ark, and Westminster-Hall would undoubtedly defend and maintain MAGNA CHARTA.*

*And now, Reader, 'tis high time to dismiss thee, and refer thee to the Ensuing Paper. The Author's only desire is, that you would be sparing in your Censures, till you come to the End. He means Well, and wishes (none more) and prays for the Peace of our Jerusalem, and that God would be pleased to prosper our Sion, and defend it from its Adversaries on every side; from Popery, the Foundation and Source of all our Miseries, and from all the other Sects among us, whose Origin is from Rome. In one Word, God grant, that our Church may continue to be the Bulwark of Christianity, and the Joy of the Christian World; and so wishing thee, the Church and State a happy New-Year, I bid thee heartily Farewel.*

*New-Years-day. 1708,9.*

*May*

1942-1943

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you.

1802 1803 1804

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*May it please your Grace,*

**W**HEN I reflect on (and consider) the Vast and almost Infinite Distance betwixt your Grace and me ; I am almost afraid that my presuming to address your Grace, will meet with hard Censures from a Churlish and an Ill-natur'd Age : But, My Lord, an Ant may see that which escapes the Eagle's View : For 'tis not only possible and probable, but 'tis also most certain, that the Inferiour Clergy are more sensible of some Irregularities in some of their Brethren, than your Grace can be : For your Grace is so taken up with the Great Affairs both of Church and State, that 'tis not possible that small Matters should find Admittance.

*Non vacat exiguis rebus adesse Jovi.*

I don't doubt in the least, My Lord, but that 'tis the Duty of every Church-man to put his helping hand towards the Reforming some Abuses crept into the best of Churches, (as all the Foreign Reform'd do think our Mother to be) : But, without Offence, I hope, to my Superiours, I may have leave to make some just Reflections on True and Real Irregularities, committed by some of my Brethren. The Welfare of our Church I shall only regard, and the Persons of the Offenders I shall be tender of : But their Irregularities I shall not pass by without a just Censure. 'Twill be a great piece of service to our Church, if I set things right ; and if those Irregularities be remov'd, a mighty Stumbling-block will be taken away, and our Dissenting Brethren will be mightily pleas'd, and in pleasing them I shall obtain your Grace's Favour : And who knows, but when they are in the Humour, they may become hearty and sincere Members of our Church, the Glory of the World. God send----- I have the Prayers and good Wishes of all the Orthodox Clergy, that God would be pleas'd to bless my honest and well-meaning Undertaking, and by it am in hopes that I shall merit your Grace's Favour : For would it not be a Heaven upon Earth, to have our Clergy without Spot or  
B Wrinkle,

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Wrinkle, and to be in such a State, that the worst, and most bitter of our Enemies should not have any just Grounds or Occasions to object against us. I do not pretend (for I cannot) to attledge any thing against the Morals of that Body ; for the World is convinc'd, that they are a Sober, and the most Learned Clergy in the Catholick Church. A Foreigner long ago, did stile our Clergy, *Stupor Mundi*, and it is as true still ; and your Grace, and many others, are flaming, and eminent Instances of it.

The following Remarks strike at *Irregularities* of several sorts : As, 1. Such as swerve from the strict Observation of the Rubrick of our Church.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Such as violate the Canons of it.

3<sup>dly</sup>, I shall make my Remarks on some mixt Cases, yet *Irregularities* ; All which in their Order.

The First sort of *Irregularities* are such as swerve from the strict Observation of the Rubrick of our Church.

\* See the Rubrick before the Burial Office

'Tis agreed amongst the Clergy, that the Funeral Office ought to be us'd only in Consecrated Ground, and the \* Rubrick supposes it. And upon this depends a famous Story of the Wife of one of your Grace's Order ; who was bury'd, say some, in *Bunhill-Fields*, amongst the Ranters, Fifth-Monarchy-Men, Presbyterians, Antipædobaptists, Independants, and *French Prophets* ; A Blessed Crew, to rise with at the Resurrection of the Just : Others say, that this Lady was buried at *Bethlehem-Ground* ; the Place makes no great difference ; only, say some, but I know not upon what Proof, that the latter Ground was consecrated : Indeed, if this was true, I confess, it takes off a great deal of the Scandal.

To this Honourable Funeral were invited Clergymen of great Figure ; amongst which were the learned M—, the Silver-tongu'd M—, with Mr. C—, and others, that held up the Pall ; and the Person officiating, was Mr. B—, who, I believe, upon Second Thoughts, would have acted otherwise.

Now, Gentlemen, and Brethren, if this Funeral Pomp was solemnized at the former Place, what a great Scandal have you brought on the Gown ! How can you answer it to God and the Church, to grace the *Camiterium* of Schismatics and worse, with your Presence upon such a solemn Occasion ? And you, Mr. B—, if the Story be true, as I hope in God it is not, how can you answer your Behaviour



to God, the Church, and my Lord the Bishop. I shall not censure you, but shall leave that to your Reverend Diocesan.

But, say others, This mighty Noise is about Nothing, for that the Funeral was at *Bethlehem* Ground; and the Case is alter'd; for that Ground was solemnly consecrated by a Bishop. I am glad to hear it with all my Heart: and to save their Credits, I wish it were true. But the Difficulty is in the Proof. But, Gentlemen, were it true 'twas more than you knew, when you undertook that Business, and so 'twas only by mere Chance, you were in the right. And to mollifie every thing, 'tis said, that it was the desire of the Deceased to lie by her first Husband, be the Place where it will; and 'tis a barbarous thing not to fulfil the Will of the Dead. In such a case, with submission, I think otherwise; for Honour and my Lord's Character, would be more than enough to appoint a Place of Burial. This Case ought to be left to his Lordship's Discretion; and, if I may presume to offer my Thoughts, a Cathedral, or Church would have been more Honourable for his Lady's Interment. But what shall I say? It may be, his Lordship had some Relations already in that Place, which procur'd more easily his Lordship's Concurrence. But, your Grace, that descended from the sequestered, and Orthodox Divines of our Church, I am sure, will think otherwise; and so I shall take leave of this Point, and submit it to your Grace's Judgment and Censures.

Methinks I see a By-stander, thus addressing himself to your Grace; My Lord, there have been loud Clamours, much Noise, and some Reflexions upon several Persons of Learning and Piety, concerning their Presence at a certain Funeral. Be it so, that the Place of Burial was not consecrated by a Bishop: What then? Is it reasonable, that some shall be censur'd, and others go scot-free for the self-same Act? I think, in such a case All ought to be censur'd, or else acquitted. But, to come to the point: What was done but once at *Bunhill*, or *Bethlehem*, is weekly, and sometimes oftener, done at *Poplar*-Ground, and yet no Din and Noise is rais'd against that Reverend Doctor; 'tis rather by some chosen, because not consecrated. Thus he—

What the Gentleman has alledged, is Fact, and its Truth is as clear as the Meridian Sun: My Lord of *London* knows it, and I am told, has often proffer'd to consecrate it upon

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an Endowment, tho' small. His Lordship is clear, and the Matter sticks somewhere else. And, to take away all scandal for the time to come, I could wish, that your Grace would send out your Injunctions to that Doctor to stop all Funerals in that Ground, and Baptisins in that Chappel, till both are consecrated.

2dly, There are some Clergymen, that have, as St. Peter says, *forsoaken the right way, and have gone astray, following the way of Balaam the Son of Bosor, who loved the ways of unrighteousness.* In plain English, My Lord, I mean, some Clergy, when they visit the Sick, have the Hardiness (to call it no worse) to take Money for it; and this I take for a scandalous Irregularity, and on which I next intend to Remark.

I have too much reason, my Lord, not to doubt of the Frequency of this very ill Practice, among some of the Clergy in and about London. I am told, that 'tis arriv'd to such a Height and Esteem, that 'tis stiled a *Pretty Perquisite.* O *Tempora!* O *Mores!* Men of Figure some, and D. D. Divines, and others of inferiour Degrees, make too too much practice of it. No Man has a more fervent Desire to maintain the Dignity of the Sacerdotal Office, than my self: and were it possible to stifle this sordid Practice, none would be more willing: But the Contagion is spread, and there is a grand Necessity of applying a Remedy, and curing its Malignity; and to whom shall I apply, but to your Grace, to discourage this foul and enormous Practice. The Honour of the Clergy lies at stake; and to suffer such vile Doings to go on unpunisht, will sink their Credit to such a Degree, that we shall become the Off-scouring and Ridicule of the Deists and Atheists. To visit the Sick, is the most charitable Office in the World, and has been so accounted in all the Ages of the Christian Church. And shall we do nothing but with the prospect of sordid Gain? 'Tis recorded of our Blessed Lord, that he went about doing good: But we do not read that he received Bribes for his extended Charity to the Souls of Men. And dare we, who are his Ministers, presume to do otherwise? Dare we, who are appointed to attend dying Souls lying on the Beds of Languishing, expect the Gains of Ungodliness? Good God! How are some of us fallen from the practice of the Golden Age of the Church! We blame, and that justly, the pra-



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practice of the Priests of the Church of Rome, in strowling about, and selling Indulgences to the Cheating the Souls of poor deluded Christians; and this Villainous practice was the first Motive of *Martin Luther's* Revolt from that Corrupted Church; and how near do those of our Church, who make a gain of their visiting the Sick, come to them, I need not tell your Grace. But it may be said that 'tis a scandal thrown upon us by our Enemies, whose delight is to tarnish the Reputation of our Clergy. Would to God, this was the Case; But this I can assure your Grace, that there is too much truth in the Allegation; and within the little Circle of my own Knowledge. I can, (and am sorry to say it) prove it, even to a Demonstration; for to instance in some particulars; there was a poor Woman that desired a Reverend Doctor to visit her own Husband; and after his Exhortations and long Purlitanical Prayers, she was willing to gratify him; she had but two Shillings and Sixpence in the whole World, and the Doctor had the Conscience (shall I call it) to leave her only the poor Size. The self-same Person (of whom I could multiply Instances, for I believe, 'tis his constant Practice) visited another Person, (whom I well know) and who indeed was in good Circumstances) and from her took ten Shillings, and three for the Coach, though within one Mile from his own House.

I do not know, but that this villainous Way of Proceeding has been the main Occasion of many Souls going unprepared to the other World; for in my Walks I have seen too much of it; many times, and almost innumerable, I have my self been tempted to accept Money; but I thank God (who enabled me with Courage) that I always refus'd it. I should be glad to know the Reason of such a general Inclination in all sorts of People to proffer a Gratuity upon such solemn Occasions, if too too many Persons were not as ready to receive it. The Church requires (and good Men pray for) the Reformation of Manners of these Men; and it lies at your Grace's Door to remove this Stumbling-Block.

Were I to search for the Original of this foul Practice, I believe I should find it amongst the Dissenting Teachers; and if it be so, is it not a burning shame for some of our Clergy

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Clergy to tread in their steps? I hope I have said enough (some Men may think too much) to move your Grace to Censure such Irregular Members that are guilty of this foul Practice, that tends to the dishonour of God, the discredit of the Church, and the Hazard of their own immortal Souls.

\* See the  
private Form

Another great Irregularity amongst some of the Clergy, is the manner of Administration of \* Private Baptism; the Church has ordered a Form for it; and I would ask the Question, How often is that Form us'd with Charge to the Parents, as it directs, to bring the Infant to Church to be received into the Congregation? But instead of that, the Publick Form is generally used; How Inconsistent? How Incongruous? How Unaccountable is this way?

In times of Yore 'twas otherwise, and it lies in your Grace's Power to bring it to its pristine Use. Besides, as 'tis now practised, it makes meer Laquies of the Clergy, and they are oblig'd to dance after every one's Pipe *for filthy Lucre's sake*, as the Apostle styles it. This renders the Clergy vile and sordid in the Eyes of the Laity, and sinks the Sacerdotal Office to the lowest degree. In a little time a set Discourse about House-Baptism may see the Light, upon which account it will be needless to trouble your Grace any farther with it.

\* See the  
Rubrick of  
Matrimony.

The Solemnization of \* Marriage in some Places is very Irregular, and your Grace ought to be acquainted with it, being highly Scandalous in several Respects; I mean, some Clergymen daring to Marry without Banns or License. The Rubrick directs, That upon Festivals, they shall, where the Parties dwell, be publickly ask'd in the publick Congregation. But this good old way is notoriously abused and perverted by some, whose Names I could bring to Light, but I spare them. There are several thousands Married (and many of them undone) in the Fleet-Prison, Lamb's-Chappel and other places, and yet the Offenders go unpunished; and this, with submission to your Grace, is a burning Shame, and a Practice intolerable. I have often thought it highly Reasonable to lay it before the High-Court of Parliament; but since the Offenders are Ecclesiasticks, it more reasonably falls under your Grace's Cognifance; I shall not presume to offer Reasons to stop this foul Practice,



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Practice, but shall leave it to your Grace, whose high Station in the Church, and whose vast knowledge, can easily find Ways and Means to put a stop to this abominable Practice, which very probably has been the Ruine of the Sons and Daughters of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom. It has been a wonder to me, that their Complaints have not reached your Grace's Ears, and it is high time to apply a Remedy, and God grant that the time was come that there be no more complaining in our Streets.

It is supposed by the Rubrick, that all Persons should be present at the publick Service, to offer up their Petitions to the Almighty; But a vile Practice has for some Years obtained that some of the Clergy spend their time (whilst the Congregation is imployed in the Sacrifices of Prayers and Praises) I know not how, in the Vestries. This ought not to be done, it carries with it a loud Scandal, and puts a Stumbling Block in the way of the People. I cannot imagine what such Clergymen can say in their own Defence, and how they can maintain this sordid Practice; their way is not defensible, and ought to be Censured. I was once told of a Conference betwixt a Layman and a Doctor of Figure and Consummate Learning, on this Point. Sir, says the Layman, What thoughts have you of our solemn way of Worship of our Church? To which the Doctor reply'd, That he thought it was the most Rational Piece of Service that was ever used in the Christian Church. Pardon me, Sir, I think, says the Layman, that your thoughts are otherwise; why so, says the Doctor? because replied he, you act otherwise; for why should I mind your Words when your Deeds run Counter to them. Your meaning, quoth the Doctor. Well, Sir, replied the Layman, it cannot be, that your Sentiments are real, when you spend that time (that should be employed in the Congregation of the Saints) in the Vestry. At which the Doctor was Non-plussed, and so the Conference ended.

And now I cannot forbear to let your Grace know an odd Circumstance of a Lazy Clergyman, and how he spent his time in the Vestry during Divine Service, I was an Eye-Witness to the Matter of Fact; this Reverend Person I found stretched out at length on Chair without Wigg, and Head tied up in Linnen, covering his Face with a Napkin. This

very

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very odd sight strangely amazed me; and had I not been a Spectator, its Narration would have been incredible. At first Blush I took it for a Corps laid out, in order for Interment; but Motion soon rectified my Sentiments. Your Graces Order will alter this Irregularity, which would tend to the Glory of God, and real Satisfaction of all true Christians. And I lately understand that the Industrious and Learned Mr. Bennet in one of his Tracts, has lashed this Irregularity, though I have not seen it; I do not doubt, but that he has done it to the purpose, and I hope to full purpose, as it will be superfluous in me to add more Words.

The next Irregularity I shall mention, is the time and season of publick Prayers of the Church. In some Churches of the Country, the Form of Prayers is only used on the Lords-Day, and in others only on *Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday*. This was not the prime Intention of the Church, as is apparent from the Rubrick and Calendar. First for the Rubrick, 'And the Curate that Ministreth in every Parish-Church, or Chapel, being at Home, or not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish-Church or Chapel, where he Ministreth, and cause a Bell to be Tolded thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the People may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him.'

\* See the Rubrick concerning the Service of the Church.

But this \* Rubrick, and others, must be accounted amongst the Cobwebs of Dr. *Pain*, or the Lumber of Dr. *Isam*; which odious Comparisons may be found in the Answer to Mr. *Long's Vox Cleri*, and in the *Visitation Sermon* of the latter, printed not long since by *Walter Kettilby*. What the first Dr. did, in comparing Queen *Elizabeth* to a nasty Slut, that left Cobwebs in every Corner, was not strange, if you compare that with his other Actions; but the other amazed me, considering whose Chaplain he had been of a long standing, and considering what Reputation he had amongst the Learned and Orthodox Clergy; but the Dr. grew old and forgot himself; and this, My Lord, shews the Truth of that saying, *Humanum est errare*; and I must have the Charity for that excellent Person, as to say, that this was the only Blemish of his Writings; but they are both gone to their place, and it is not Human to insult the

Ashes



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Ames of the Dead, always bearing in mind that of Loyal  
Cowley, viz. *In aridis, calidis, et in solis ardore*

*His wicked, with insulting Feet to tread*

*Upon the Monuments of the Dead.*

But Secondly, as to the Calendar, which has provided  
Lessons for all Days in the Year. Now I would fain know  
what was the Intention of our Holy Mother the Church, in  
appointing a Calendar, if the Clergy were not daily to of-  
fciate. The case is so plain, that I shall not expatiate, but  
shall leave it to my Brethren to reflect on.

The Non-Administration of the Lord's Supper, is ano-  
ther Irregularity, and shall next be spoke to. The Rubrick  
not only supposes, but is also express, that when the Com-  
munion-Service is appointed to be used, that Service ought  
to conclude with the Administration of the Lord's Supper.  
One Rubrick runs thus: *So many as intend to be Partakers of* see the Office  
*the Holy Communion, and so on.* Another begins thus: *The*  
*Table at the Communion-time, having a fair Linnen Cloth upon*  
*it—* I would fain know, why are these Directions, if  
the Sacrament is not to be administred at the same time?  
Now the Church has appointed this solemn Service to be  
used on all *Sundays* and *Holidays*; and therefore on all  
those Days the Lord's Supper is to be administred: Yet some  
are so unaccountably Irregular, tho' the Sacrament is not  
always on those Days administred, yet, I know not how it  
comes to pass, the *Prayer for the Church militant*, with others,  
and the Blessing in some Churches, is wholly omitted; and  
the Minister concludes in the Pulpit. This odd Practice  
(My Lord) I cannot account for. In the proper Prefaces  
for the Communion-Service, those Collects after *Christmas*,  
*Easter*, and *Ascension-day*, are to be used seven days after, and  
upon *Whitsunday*, six. The Church suppos'd the Sacrament  
on all those Days to be given, or why else are the Collects  
order'd to be read? These were the *Octaves* of the *Ancient*  
*Church*; and so many Days, as *Holidays*, were set apart for  
the Greater Solemnization of those Festivals, and the same  
Communion-Office was read on all those Days; and not  
only so, but I believe 'twill appear from another Rubrick,  
that our Church commanded a daily Communion, or else, I  
confess, I do not understaud it. It runs thus, as your Grace  
may see in the Order, how the rest of the H. Scripture is

appointed to be read. Note also, that the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, appointed for the Sunday, shall serve all the Week after, where'tis not in this Book otherwise order'd. Now what can be said to this Rubrick, if the Collect, Epistle and Gospel be enjoyn'd to be read every day, then must the Communion-Service be likewise read: If so, then the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, is to be daily given, *quod erat demonstrandum*. I am afraid by some this Rubrick is to be thrown away with the Cobwebs and Lumber of the two Reverend Doctors. But there is no manner of Doubt, but that your Grace thinks otherwise; and so with your Grace's leave, I'll pass to some other Matter.

And the next Irregularity I shall speak to, relates to the Non-Observation of the Vigils, Feasts and Fasts which our Church has commanded. There are several Reasons assign'd by Learned Men for the Institution of Vigils, which comes from the Latin *Vigilia*, Watchings; but none comes nearer the Truth, than those who impute the Rise of these Night-Watches, to the necessity Christians were under of meeting in the Night, and before Day, for the Exercise of their Devotions in common, by reason of the Malice and Persecution of their Enemies, who endeavoured their Destruction, when they discover'd them to be Christians. God be thank'd there is not yet the same reason for those of the Church to observe the Vigils: But God only knows, how soon (for our Sins) it may be our case: For it is sad to consider, and a melancholick Theme to insist on, when we see the Church and Priesthood insulted with Deists, Socinians, and all sorts of Dissenters, and no check put to it by the Higher Powers. But 'tis stranger to consider the Boldness of our Enemies, when the Person upon the Throne is a strict Observer of the Doctrines of our Church.

But, 'tis to be hop'd the Reign of our rampant Enemies is but short. God send—— But another Reason which still holds good, for the Observation of Vigils, is this; \* It was the Custom of the Primitive Christians to pass great part of the Night that precedeth certain Holidays, in Devotion and Religious Exercises: and this even in those Places which they set apart for the publick Worship of God. But when these Night-Adorings came so far abused, that no Care could prevent several Disorders and Irregularities, the Church thought fit to abolish them, and these

\* Nelsin's  
Compan. of  
Festivals,  
and Fasts, p.  
364.



## the Irregularities of some of its Clergy.

11

Night Watches were converted into Fasts, still keeping the former Name of Vigils. Our Church still commands the Observation of them, as is apparent from the Table of Vigils, before the Nativty of our Lord, and several other Festivals. And the Rubrick after the Nicene Creed enjoins the Curate to declare what Fasting Days in the Week following are to be observ'd. And what the Days of Fasting or Abstinence are, may be learnt from the Rubrick; as the 40 Days of Lent, &c. The next is Festivals, or Days kept in Commemoration of our Saviour and his Apostles; and we are informed by the abovesaid pious and Religious Person (whose admirable Book, I think, ought to be in all Hands, as I dare say, 'tis in your Grace's) how they ought to be employ'd: But first, we ought to know, how the Primitive Christians observ'd these Days of Joyfulness, which was thus:

\* They were wont once a Week to meet at the Graves of the Martyrs, there solemnly to recite their Sufferings and Triumphs, to praise their Vertues, to bless God for their pious Examples, for their holy Lives, and happy Deaths. Besides, they celebrated these Days with great Expressions of Love and Charity to the Poor, and mutual Rejoycings with one another. The next Enquiry is, how these Days ought now to be observ'd. We should (says the abovesaid Great Person) constantly attend the Publick Worship, and partake of the Blessed Sacrament, if it be administered. In private, we should enlarge our Devotions, and suffer the Affairs of the World to interrupt us as little as may be. If we do commemorate any Mystery of our Redemption, or Article of our Faith, we ought to confirm our Belief of it, by considering all those Reasons upon which it is built, that we may be able to give a good account of the Hope that is in us. We should from our hearts offer to God the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and diligently perform all those Duties, which result from the Belief of such an Article. If we commemorate any Saint, we should consider the Vertues for which he was eminent, and by what Steps he arriv'd at so great Perfection; and then examine ourselves how far we are deficient in our Duty, and earnestly beg God's Pardon for our past Failings, and his Grace to enable us to conform our Lives for the time to come, to these admirable Examples that are set before us. Thus far that excellent Author.

That Festivals ought to be kept in our Church, is plain from the Table of Fasts. And that the Clergy ought

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See the Rubrick.

ought to give such Notice to the People on the Lord's Day, is as plain from the Rubrick after the *Nicene Creed*. Now it would be richly worth your Grace's while to order an *Inquirendum* thro' your Province in this, as well as in other Matters: But I dare not presume to dictate.

See the Rubrick.

The next Irregularity that I shall mention, is this: Some of our Brethren have got a lazy way of repeating other Mens Sermons. Now, I think, this is against the Rubrick; for that after the *Nicene Creed* it thus directs; *Then shall follow the Sermon, or one of the Homilies*.—Now is supposed, that if a Person (as 'twas the case of many at the Dawning of the Reformation) be so ignorant, as not able to compose a Sermon; then the Church orders him to read one of the Homilies. But if he be of Ability, then to use one of his own composing. But the case is alter'd; for I've often heard (and blushing for them I speak it) other Mens Works echo'd from the Pulpit; and I do not in the least doubt, but that others have so too. I could name the Persons, but shall not at present; I do not know what I shall do hereafter. What a shame is it to hear the Works of the Profound *Barrow*, the Great *Tillotson*, and many others of Fame, odly managed, and uncouthly spoken from the Pulpit. I think, with submission, this ought to be rectify'd. Nay, more than that, there's a greater Insolence behind. I could name to your Grace those Men who had the Forehead, not only to deliver other Mens Works, but also to print them, tho' printed before. What shall I call this? One of this sort of Men was Camp Chaplain to Gracious K. *William* of not-to-be-forgotten Memory by your Grace.

See the Rubrick.

The next Remark shall be upon the Irregularity of the Burial of the Dead. The Rubrick runs in these Words. *The Office ensuing is not to be used for any that die un-baptized, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves.* I have reason to think, that some of the Clergy do often violate the two last Clauses. To begin with the last, concerning Suicide: If a Person (as I could instance in many,) of a great Estate, makes away with himself, his Relations shall have the Credit of the Attendance of the Clergy, and the Office (Oh shame to speak it) of Burial shall be read. This, My Lord, ought not to be done; for where's the Hope that a Self-Murderer sleeps in Jesus; and that Office is only



to be used for such that die in the Lord. As for Excommunicates, tis plain and expresse, that they are excluded, and have no manner of right to that Solemn Office: yet how often is it used for all Sorts of Schismaticks. The Ancient, nay, our Church, in one of the Canons, censures them as *ipso facto* Excommunicates. And, my Lord, tis a Jest to say, they are not Schismaticks, because the Civil Government has exempted them from certain Penalties, laid on them by several Acts of Parliament, which are only *pro tempore* suspended. Now I think, with submission to my Superiours, If they were Schismaticks (as no doubt they were) before the Act of Toleration, they continue still so, and so by consequence, as Excommunicates, they have no shadow of Right to have that Office used at their Funeral; and your Clergy hope that your Grace will redress that intolerable Grievance: for how can we use these Expressions concerning Schismaticks (who die in their Schism) *In sure and certain hope* — as our hope is this our Brother doth. This is a Hardship upon the Clergy, and I cannot account for it. We must not mangle the Service, and if we use the whole, it is to the highest degree absurd and unaccountable. What must we do in this Extremity? Your Grace, only with the Assistance of an *Honest Convocation*, can relieve us. Would to God that time was come. I dare say, that those Pious Compilers of our *Common-Prayer* (who sealed it with their dearest Blood thought as I do, *viz.* that Schismaticks had not right to that Office. For the Sin of Schism is of that hainous Hue, that some of the Ancient Fathers thought, that Atonement for it could not be attained, tho' by Martyrdom it self. And I apt to think, that our Pious Reformers had some such Thoughts of it. For Schism, as the Words import, is Division, or a cutting off from the Catholick Church: And if so, and if it be the case of Hood-winkt Dissenters, I am sure they have no right to that Office.

I shall only mention one more Irregularity, or a breaking in upon the Rubrick by some of the Clergy, and that is Churching at Home. The Rubrick directs the Woman, at the usual time after her Delivery to come into the Church. — Then the Priest shall say to her, but the present practice in some places is quite reverse. It must be

• See the Rubrick.

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be done in the Chamber, or not at all. Now could we perswade those Persons to bring their tender Children to the Church to be enroll'd Members of the Catholick Church; I hope their tender Mothers would oblige the Congregation with their Company; for what place so proper, as the Altar, to return God thanks for those wonderful Mercies, they lately received. And yet no Arguments will prevail; in defence of this Practice, many pretences, (and they are nothing but pretences) are used; as catching of Cold, Modesty and what not. But the true reason is at the bottom; and that is, Pride. The Clergy must dance after them, and they will be attended. Tho' the practice is servile, yet in the Clergy, I hope, 'tis not sinful, at least not more sinful, than Baptizing (without any necessity) at Home; I have done with my Remarks on the Violators of our Rubrick; and leave them now to the Censure of your Grace.

a. I shall proceed (with your Grace's leave) in the second place to consider the Violators of the Canons of our Church, as they are Clergy-Men; I beg your Grace's Pardon and Attention, whilst I run thro' the whole Body of the Canons and Constitutions of the Church, which are confirmed by A<sup>&</sup> of Parliament; I shall only (at present) make some Remarks; How many are violated by some of the Clergy.

\* See the  
Can. and  
Const. of  
K. James.

Can. 1.

The first Canon commands all Ecclesiasticks from the Arch-bishop to the Priest, to maintain the King's Supremacy; and in the Body of the Canon is this Clause; Furthermore, all Ecclesiastical Persons having cure of Souls, and all other Preachers, and Readers of Divinity Lectures, shall to the utmost of their Wit, Knowledge and Learning, purely and sincerely, and (without any Colour and Dissimulation) Teach, Manifest, Open, and Declare four times every year (at least) in their Sermons, and other Collations and Lectures, that all Usurped and Sovereign Power is fully taken away—Is this Canon strictly observed by the Clergy? Do all Preachers and Lecturers comply with the Letter of it? Upon a *Melius Inquiredum*, I am afraid, your Grace will find it, almost, if not wholly laid aside. I am sure the Toleration A<sup>t</sup> does not affect it; therefore it continues of Force, and obliges the Clergy to a due Observation; and I know not, how they can An-  
swer



swer the Non-observance of it; I wish, I could find out a Method to excuse them.

The fourteenth Canon relates to the Form of Divine Service, which is to be used on *Sundays* and *Holydays*; and in the Body of that Canon is this Clause; *All Ministers likewise shall observe the Orders, Rites and Ceremonies prescrib'd in the Book of Common-Prayer, as well in reading the Holy Scriptures and saying of Prayers, as in Administration of the Sacraments, without either diminishing in regard of Preaching, or in any other respect; or adding in the Matter or Form thereof.* Is this Canon in all and every part strictly observ'd by all the Clergy? Is there no Curtailing, Mungling, or adding to the Prayers? It is worth an Enquiry. Can. 14.

The fifteenth Canon orders the Litany to be read by the Clergy on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*; I would fain know, whether this Canon is strictly observed by the Parochial Clergy in the Country; I am afraid upon search 'twill be found otherwise. Can. 15.

The 27th. Canon orders, that Schismatics should not be admitted to the Communion. *No Minister, when he Celebrateth the Communion, shall willingly Administer the same to those that refuse to kneel, upon the pain of Suspension, nor to any deprovers of the Common-Prayer, &c.* Upon this Canon I shall presume to make two Remarks; as first, do any of the Clergy comply with the request of superstitious People, as to give the Holy Sacrament to them, sitting in their Seats? I know, that has been done formerly; I wish it is not now by some of the moderate Clergy. The next Remark shall be upon a great difficulty, lying upon some of the Clergy, the case is this; suppose a notorious Schismatick, qualifying himself for a Place of profit upon that Scandalous Practice of Occasional Communion. This Person offers himself to the Minister, tho' he never designs to be there again, except it be upon the same Occasion. If the Minister admits the Schismatick to Communion; he violates the Canon; if he refuses him; the Schismatick brings his Action against him in one of the Courts of *Westminster*; which may prove the actual Ruin of the Clergy-man. Now, my Lord, what's to be done in this case? I wish your Grace will oblige the World with your Sentiments on it. But were it my own case, I would observe the Canon, and leave Can. 27.

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leave the event to God; I should rather commit my Conscience and Family to his disposal; be the consequence what it will. If I admit him I am liable to a three years Suspension, which may be my Ruin, as to my temporal Affairs; if I refuse him; I can be but undone with the Violation of my Conscience, and Disobedience to the Canon and my Diocesan. But all Men think not, as I do.

The 28th. Canon Orders that Strangers should not be admitted to the Communion; and in the Body of it, the Church-wardens are to take notice, whether any Strangers come often and commonly from other Parishes to their Church, and shall shew their Minister of them, lest perhaps they be admitted to the Lord's Table amongst others, which they shall forbid, and remit such home to their own Parish Churches and Ministers, there to receive the Communion with the rest of their Neighbours. Do the Church-wardens and Minister Act, as the Canon enjoyns, for in the Canon both are comprehended? do they order such to return to their own Churches, there to receive? I am afraid, nay, I am sure, that some of the Clergy are in this case tardy. Right reason is the Foundation of this Canon; and I can never enough admire the Wisdom of our Ancestors in their providing so well for the welfare of the Church, as they have done in this Excellent Canon. For were that minded, as it ought to be; that would prevent a further mischief, that often happens, which is, the admitting of Excommunicates and other Notorious Sinners to that sacred Ordinance. For suppose an Excommunicatè, or any notorious ill Liver is repuls'd, as they ought to be, from the Lord's Table, they could never be admitted elsewhere; for an Excommunicate, whilst so, is shut out of the whole Catholick Church; and this was the practice of the Primitive Christians, and ought to be so, not only in our Church, but wherever the Church of Christ is dispers'd. Besides, this allowance of People strowling from their Parochial Ministers, often produces another ill Effect, viz. a slight to their own Pastors, and an admiration for Strangers, which, I think, ought to be prevented; and a due Observation of this Canon, with your Grace's Injunction, would put a stop to this unhappy Practice.

The



The 33<sup>d</sup>. Canon relates to Titles of such, as are to be made Ministers; 'Tis too long to Transcribe, I shall only cull out, what are true Titles, and Qualifications for Orders. A Presentation to some Living, or a true and undoubted Certificate, that a Person is provided of some Church within the said Diocese. Or a Vacancy in the Cathedral Church of that Diocese; or in some Collegiate Church therein; or Fellow of a College, or Conductor in either University, or Master of Art of five years standing, living at his own Expense in either University, or accept by the Bishop himself, that doth ordain him Minister—These are all the Titles and Qualifications that I find in this Canon for Holy Orders, and how strangely is it perverted! My Lord of *Sarum* in his admirable Pastoral Care insists Strongly and Strenuously upon the Looseness of Certificates, and rightly observes, what vast Mischiefs such easy Certificates do bring to the Church; and it would be a great Blessing to the Church, if all Clergymen would follow his admirable Directions; we should not then have so many indigent Clergy, complaining in our Streets. The Order would be then more rever'd, and greater respect would be shew'd them; for a poor and scandalous Clergyman, I am sure, is the strangest sight in the World; And I wish, I could say, that there were none belonging to our Church. But it can't be expected, that this Grievance should be removed, except greater care were taken about Recommendations to my Lords, the Bishops. They, God knows, are not to be blamed. But 'tis the easy Clergyman with his fulsome Characters, that imposes upon their Lordships. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ*—I could give many Instances of this vile Practice to your Grace, but one only at present shall suffice, and that is more than enough to set this horrid Method in a true Light. There's a certain Clergyman (whose Name I shall conceal for many Reasons) that has a Place of no more value than eight Pound *per Annum*, that has given four Titles, that I know of, to four several Persons, that have been ordain'd upon that very Title: The first Person that was Ordain'd, did not read Prayers at the place of his Title; He's now, if alive, in a Starving and Starving Condition, begs from Door to Door for a poor and scandalous Maintenance. The second could not

live in *England*, but went to *Virginia* to try his Fortune, and some years after return'd to his own Country; and I hear he's in a low and despicable Condition. The third Person never so much as saw the Face of an University, and yet as soon as Ordain'd set up with *Asop's* Crow, for a mighty Preacher; But his Temporal Estate may prevent Poverty. The fourth is a Man of Parts, and I wish I could say, Prudence, and would live and scuffle in the World for his Wife and Family; if his Superiours in that Place would encourage him; I know him Personally; I am sure, that he has more Learning, than all the other three. But this is a Melancholick Theme to insist on, I shall say no more on this Head, but with all Humility Supplicating your Grace for the sake of the Clergy, and their Mother the Church, to find some Method to put a stop to this vile Practice, that only produces Beggars for the Sacred Order.

Can. 41.

The forty first Canon treats of Licenses for Pluralities of Benefices Limited, and Residence enjoyn'd. In the Body of it is this remarkable Clause, on which I shall Remark, provided always, that he be by a good caution, *sufficienti cautione obstrictus*, bound to make his Personal Residence in each of his said Benefices for some reasonable time of the year, *per bonam anni cuiusque partem*, at 'tis in the Latin. Now the Question is, what and how long is meant by reasonable time, *bonam cuius anni partem*. That must be Answer'd by your Grace. What then shall I say of those that seldom or never make any Personal Residence; of those that have no License from their Diocesans. There's no doubt to be made, but that such Pastors, or rather Wolves, have a heavy account to give to God and their Flocks for that scandalous Practice of Non-Residence. That case your Grace knows, and what ill Effect Non-Residence has upon the Church; but I shall say no more at present; it being largely treated on in two Pamphlets, viz. \* *The Case of Non-Residence*; and *the Reasonableness of bringing in a Bill, to oblige the Clergy to Residence*, which I presume your Grace has seen; and which have never been Answered nor never will. In a little time Bishop Carlton's thoughts of Non-Residence will see the Light, being a Supplement to the Case of Non-Residence, to which other Testi-

\* See the  
Case of Non-  
Residence  
and Reason-  
ableness,  
&c.



Testimonies against that scandalous Practice will be added.

The fifty fifth Canon contains the Form of Prayer to be Can. 55. used by Preachers before their Sermons; I am afraid some of the Clergy Transgress this Canon; for the Words, as briefly as they conveniently may, I am sure, exclude long-Winded, incoherent stuff, too much affected by some Preachers: 'Tis certain, that our publick Form of Worship is very extensive, and comprehends all Cases; and I find no occasion for a long Harangue before Sermons. I am confident, that those that use them, design a Slur upon the publick Form, and bring a Contempt on it. Some Lecturers, can't be excused; for they spend their time, I know not how, in the Vestries, during the time of Divine Service; and then they mount the Pulpit with their Amusements. 'Twould be a vast Advantage to our Church; if a strict, and unvariable Form was prescrib'd for all Preachers, and a Mulct proposed to be inflicted on the Violators. It would prevent gadding and stragling from their own Pastors; it would promote Unanimity amongst Christians, Peace, and Concord between Pastor and People; a Blessing, I am afraid too great to be expected in this Debauch'd and Atheistical Age. A Convocation, if encouraged by your Grace, might procure such a Blessing, which God grant.

Preachers and Lecturers by the *56th*. Canon are obliged Can. 56. to read Divine Service twice a year, which if not done, to be Suspended. That it is not done is a flagrant Truth, and your Grace, I suppose, is not insensible of it. The Desk of late is by some had in so great Contempt, that a Scarfe by no manner of means looks well in it. But these Gentlemen ought to consider, that the Duty of offering the Sacrifice of Prayers and Praise is of more weight and value than Preaching; but I shall meet with those mighty Don's in another Place, when I come to treat about mixt Cases: I shall therefore proceed to some fresh matter.

The fifty sixth Canon obliges the Clergy to Catechise every Sunday and Holyday, and in the body of it they are censur'd for that Omission; *If any Minister neglect his Duty therein, let him be sharply reprov'd upon the first Complaint—*  
*If after the submitting himself to the Bishop, he shall willingly*  
*Offend herein, let him be Suspended. If so the third time—*

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then Excommunicated, and so remain, until he be Reformed. This Pious Canon, I believe, was strictly observed, till those unhappy Civil Wars of Forty One, which caused the Sequestration of your Grace's Father, and the Murder of an Innocent King, with the Ruine of the Church and State. Then Canting and Hypocrisy kick'd out Catechising, which could never be restored; People love to have their Ears tickled, tho' their Understandings are not Edified, which Catechising would do. \* All sorts of People are prodigiously Ignorant in the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, and Catechising would retrieve that Ignorance to the Glory of the Church, and the great Edification of the Souls of Multitudes.

\* See the  
Decay of  
Christian  
Piety, 467,  
493.

Can. 62.

The sixty second Canon relates to the times of Marriage, which must be Solemniz'd betwixt the Hours of eight and twelve in the Morning, and in time of Divine Service, *Tempore precum publicarum*, as the Latin Canon has it; and I would fain know the Sense and Reason of that Expression; I am told by a Learned \* Man, a Sufferer with your Grace's Father, that Morning Prayer on *Sundays* and *Holy-days* began at eight in the Morning; when ended, Marriages were solemniz'd in the face of the Congregation; Doubts and Cases of Conscience were then Answer'd by the Clergy, &c. At ten the Communion Service began, then followed the Sermon, and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. This I take to be the meaning of *Tempore precum publicarum*; if it is not, I earnestly, desire a better Account from your Grace, or any other Learned Man. The Infringers of this Canon are to be suspended *per triennium*, as is apparent from the beginning of the Canon. No Minister upon Pain of Suspension *per triennium ipso facto*, &c. The Violators of this Canon have done an incredible deal of Mischief; for how many have lost their Children to the utter undoing of them; which shews the necessity of obliging the Clergy to a strict Observance of it. But I have spoke of the Case of Marriage before, and I need not repeat.

\* Heylin  
Hist. of the  
Reformation:  
98.

Can. 69.

The 69th. Canon relates to Ministers Baptizing Children in case of Danger; and if the Minister refuse to go upon a real Account, he's to be Suspended for three Months. This is so charitable an Office, as a Man would think, that a Heart of Stone only would refuse it. Yet some won't  
move,



move, except they be paid for the Journey. Our Catechism tells us, that *we are by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath*; and shall some of the Clergy by their Supineness and Covetousness, be the occasion that they should not by Baptism be made *the Children of Grace*? This ought not to be done. 'Tis a sad Cruelty to the Souls of those poor Infants; for Baptism makes them *Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Here I stop, and shall not at present proceed any further in the Canons. I shall only mention one or two mixt Cases, which would not properly fall in with the Rubrick and Canons, and so put an end to this Discourse.

First then, that Lecturers in the modern Sense of the Word are oblig'd upon a Penalty to read Divine Service once a Month. Our Church and State, by God's Blessing being recovered out of the confusion of the late times of Usurpation, which was mainly promoted and carried on by canting, Hypocritical, and snivelling Lecturers; our Senate, in the 14th Year of K. Charles II. of glorious memory, took this Case into consideration, and wisely provided for the Welfare of Church and State, by the prudent Act of Uniformity; and, I dare say, were it put into strict Execution, it would exclude that Generation of Vipers, whose Fathers eat out the Bowels of their Mother the Church. The Lord Clarendon, in his Immortal History of the Civil Wars, wisely observes, that the St. *Antoline's* Lecturers were the first Trumpeters that sounded from the Pulpit Rebellion against their Sovereign K. *Charles the Martyr*. And for the future, to prevent if possible, Rebellion in the State, and Schism in the Church, the Act of Uniformity, that sticks so much in the Stomachs of Schismatics, was composed. That which relates to Lecturers, follows in these Words: *And be it further* <sup>Act of Uniformity</sup> *enacted by the Authority aforesaid, that no Person shall be received as a Lecturer, or permitted, suffered or allowed to preach as a Lecturer in any Church, Chappel, or other Place of publick Worship within the Realm of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick upon Tweed, unless he be first approved, and thereunto Licensed by the Archbishop of the Province, or Bishop of the Diocess, or (in case the See be vacant) by the Guardian of the Spiritualities under his Seal; and shall in the Presence of the Archbishop, or Bishop, or Guardian, read the nine and thirty Articles of Religion,*

mention'd in the Statute of the thirteenth of the late Queen Elizabeth, which Declaration of his unfeigned Assent to the same; and that every Person and Persons, who now is, or hereafter shall be Licens'd, Appointed, or Receiv'd as Lecturer, to Preach upon any day of the Week in any Church or Chappel, or place of Publick Worship within this Realm of England, or places aforesaid, the first time he Preacheth (before his Sermon) shall Openly, Publickly, and Solemnly read the Common Prayers and Services in and by the said Book appointed to be read for that time of the Day, and then and there publickly and openly declare his Assent unto and Approbation of the said Book, and to the use of all the Prayers Rites and Ceremonies, Forms, and Orders therein contained and prescribed according to the Form before appointed in this Act; And also shall upon the first Lecture day of every Month afterwards, so long as he continues Lecturer and Preacher there, at the place appointed for his said Lecture or Sermon, before the said Lecture or Sermon, Openly, publickly, and Solemnly read the Common Prayers in and by the said Book appointed to be Read for that time of the Day, at which the said Lecture or Sermon is to be preached; And after such Reading thereof, shall Openly and publickly before the Congregations there Assembled, Declare his unfeigned Assent, and Consent unto, and Approbation of the said Book, and to the use of all the Prayers, Rites and Ceremonies, Forms and Orders therein contained and prescribed, according to the Form aforesaid; And that all and every such Person or Persons, who shall neglect or refuse to do the same, shall from thenceforth be disabled to Preach the said, or any Lecture or Sermon in the said or any other Church.

— I do not hear as yet, and God grant I never may, that this Clause is repealed, yet I am confident, that 'tis willingly and knowingly omitted to be put into Practice; 'tis a vast affront to Authority, and shews a Contempt to the Church and its pious Offices; In short, this general neglect of Lecturers in this Point makes the World believe, that they despise their Superiors, and their Censures, and the very Authority of Church and Queen.

Secondly, and lastly, The next thing that I shall speak of, is the fullsome method of Pulpit Commendations; 'Tis not known, what a prodigious deal of Mischief, such Characters do to common Christianity; it would make ones Hair stand an-end, to hear a common Debauchee commended for his Virtues, and Women guilty of Adultery, praised



*the Irregularities of some of its Clergy.*

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praised for their Chastity, and Men that deny the common Articles of Faith, applauded for Christianity; 'twas my hap once to hear a piece of a Sermon, Preached at the Funeral of an overgrown rich Commoner; and to my Amazement the Preacher was placing him in Paradise, without the necessity of believing several Articles of Faith; indeed my self, as well as others were afraid, that all the Articles were a-going at once, and that dry Morality alone was security enough to place a Man in Bliss and Happiness. *Auri sacra Fames* has a mighty Influence on some Preachers, and a present Recompence prevails more, than the Recompence of Reward in the other World. Another Person I heard extolling one to the Skies for a Virtuous, good Wife, of whom 'twas credibly reported, that she was not Married, but had lived several years in the Sin of Adultery. The whole Town has rung of that infamous Sermon of that Scandalous Doctor, that was Preach'd at the Funeral of the late D—— of D—— His Character and Life is too well known to be insisted on; and *Dunton* in his Book; viz. *Hazard of a Death-Bed Repentance*, has reckon'd with that Doctor; I wish, it had been done by an abler and more solid Hand. I have not time to enlarge, but shall only give some Manly Strokes of an Honest Gentleman in his excellent Sermon at *Oxford*. He was treating of the Mischief of such fulsome Pulpit Characters in those Words;

“ But as the difference of Persons may alter the Degrees of Guilt; some according to the Stations, in which they are plac'd, are more unpardonable in putting Good for Evil, and Evil for Good, than others. And those in whom it would be most intolerable, are Persons of a Sacred Character. If they, whose Judgment and Authority are and ought to be, of so much Weight, whose proper business it is to interpret the Scriptures, and truly represent the Mind of God; if they out of Fear, or Hope, or any sinister Design, should deliver that for Virtue, which they know and believe to be Vice; or any way Prevaricate, and handle the word of God deceitfully; of how sore a Punishment would these be thought Worthy, who would mis-lead the Souls committed to their Charge, prostitute their High and Holy Office to such vile Purposes, and bring a Reproach upon that Profession, which they

†, Trap be-  
fore the  
Judges.

they ought to Adorn. Our Blessed Lord assures us, that  
 ' whosoever shall break the least of his Commandments  
 ' and teach Men so, shall be called the least in the King-  
 ' dom of Heaven. Should any then of that Sacred Order  
 ' make Panegyricks upon the worst of Men, only because  
 ' they are great Men; smooth over some of their Vices,  
 ' and praise them for others; Flatter the Dead, to make  
 ' their Court to the Living, and all at the Expence of their  
 ' Integrity, by venting false Doctrine, as well as false O-  
 ' ratory, in order to advance their Fortunes, and serve their  
 ' wretched Interest in this World. What a Mass of Guilt  
 ' would they heap upon themselves; they would imitate  
 ' the Example of Judas in betraying their Lord's Religion  
 ' for Money, as the other Traitor did his Person; and  
 ' without the severest and timely Repentance, would by  
 ' the worst sort of Simony pay their Souls for the Purchase  
 ' of their Preferments.

I shall present your Grace with one Instance more of  
 fullsome Pulpit Commendation, and then I have done. One  
 of our Grace's Predecessors, Arch-Bishop T—— in a  
 Sermon before the King: He having extolled the French  
 King to the Skies for his Art of War and what not, at last  
 applies this Scripture, *Behold a greater than he is here*, to  
 King William: For which among other things, he, I mean  
 the Arch-Bishop, was Sainted by the Holburn Doctor in his  
 Prayer before the Sons of the Clergy in Cheap-side. I shall  
 now Conclude all with my hearty Prayers for the Clergy  
 of our Church, in the Words of our Incomparable Le-  
 tany. ' That it would please God to Illuminate (your  
 ' Grace and) all Bishops, Priests and Deacons, with true  
 ' Knowledge and Understanding of his Word, and that  
 ' both by their Preaching and Living, they may set it  
 ' forth, and shew it accordingly. And Grant this, O Lord,  
 for the Honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ, to  
 whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one  
 God, be ascribed all Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, World  
 without End. Amen.

LAUS DEO SOLI.